



Red and Blue Pencils*

THE SAME BUT NOT
THE SAME

Illustrations
Mistunee Chowdhury

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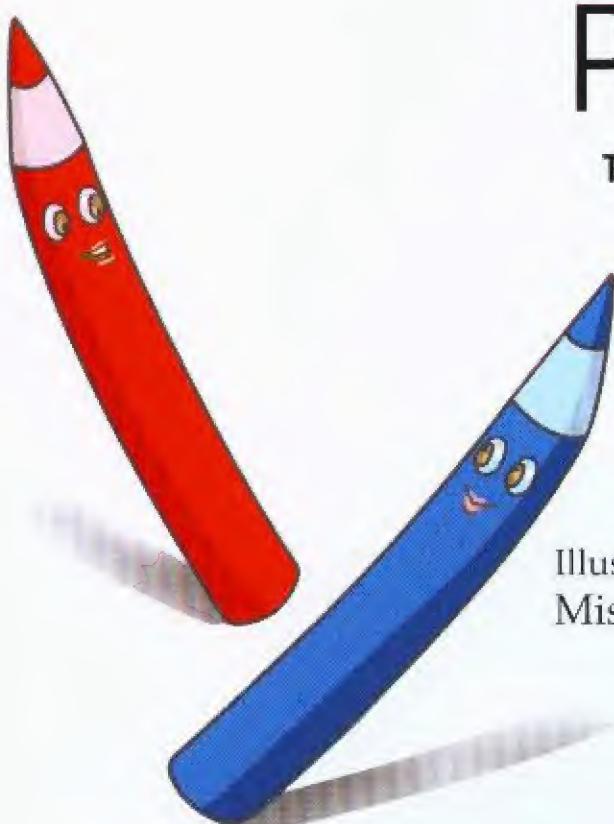
Nehru Bhawan, 5 Institutional Area, Phase-II

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A red pencil and a blue pencil were happily sitting together in the showcase of a stationery shop. They were waiting to be sold to somebody. Both pencils were dreaming about their future.

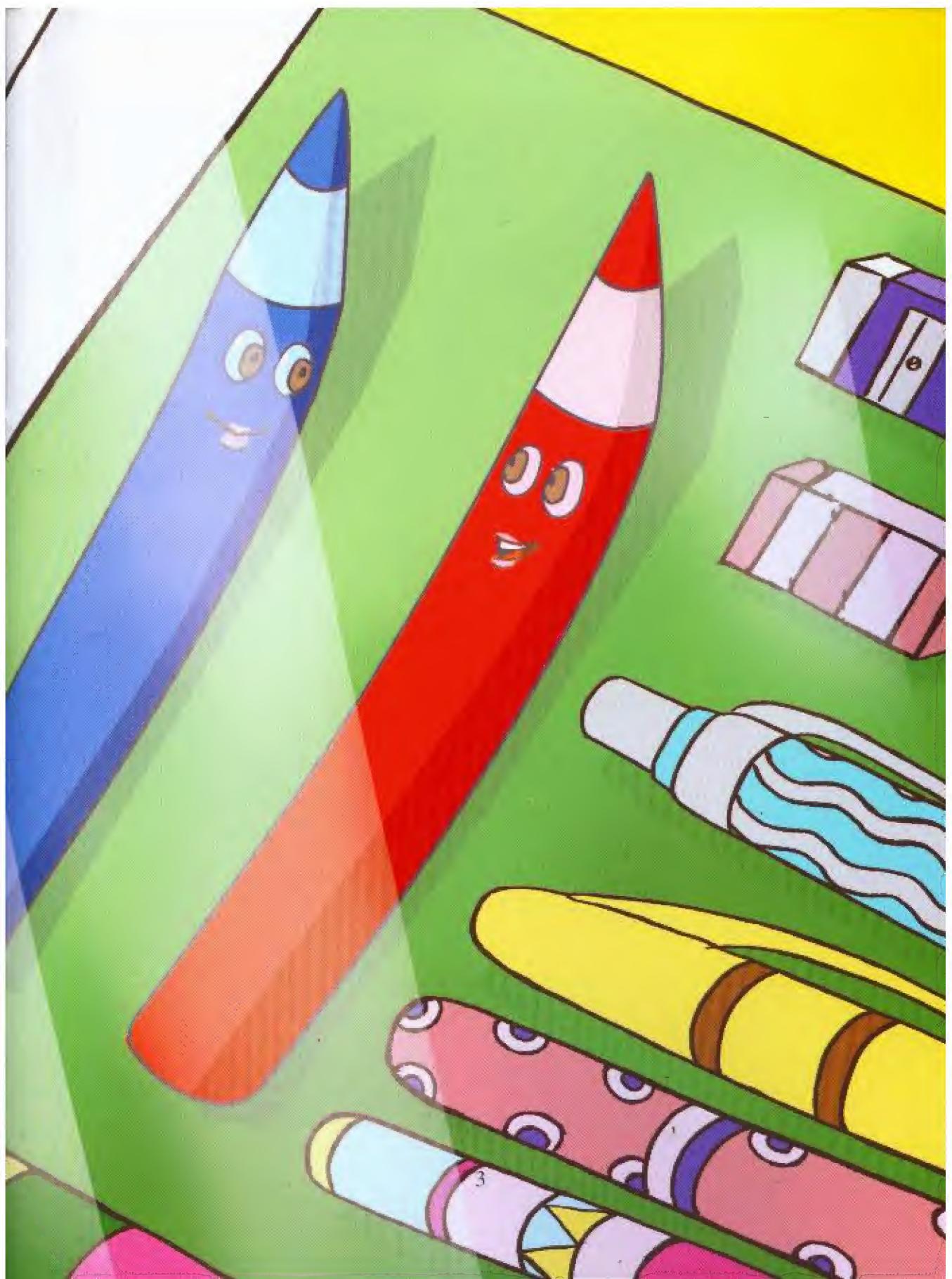
The red pencil told the blue one, "I wonder where will I go from here! I hope we go to the same place."

The blue pencil replied, "Even if we go to different places we will always remain good friends."

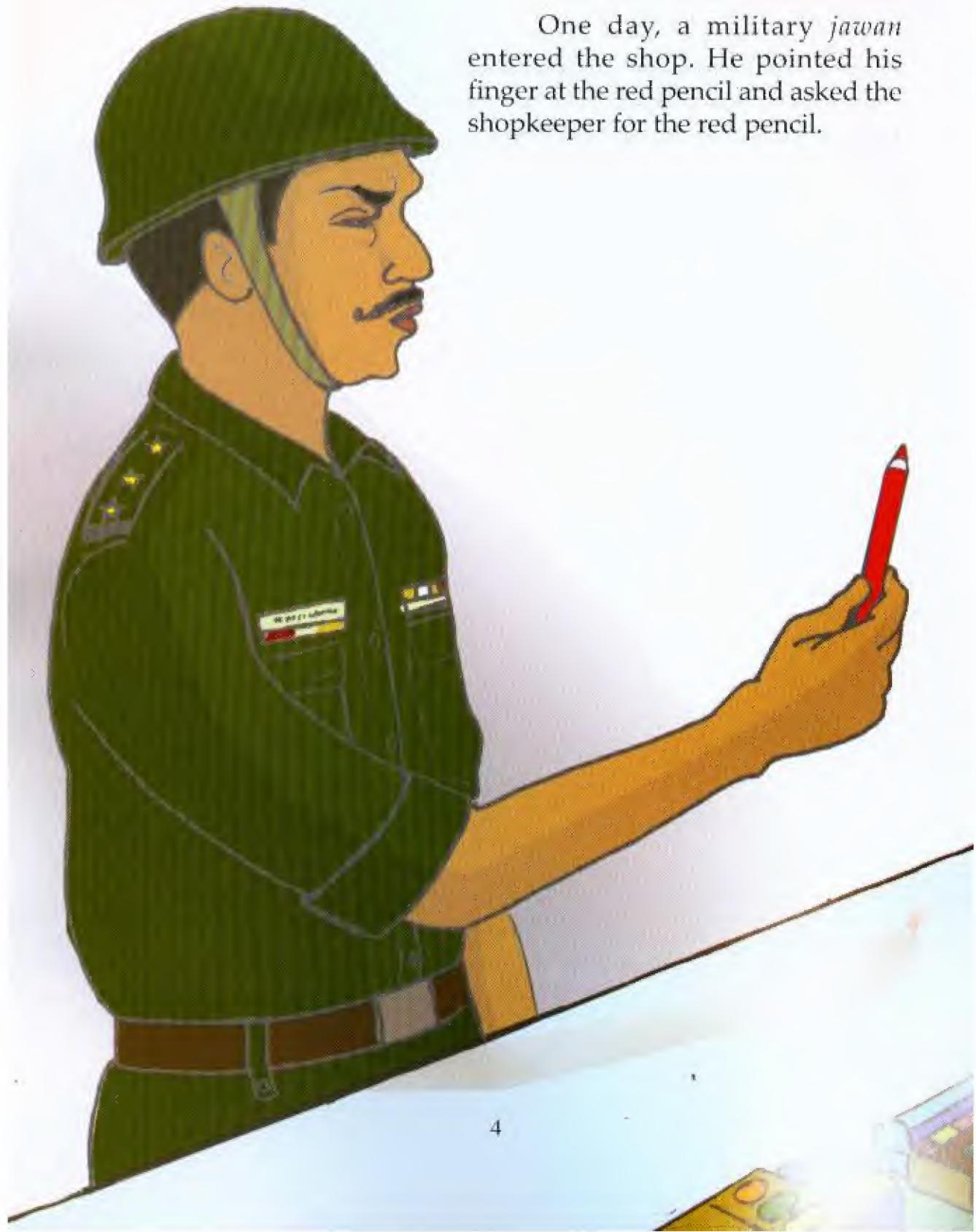
"I am sure we will meet someday, somewhere," said the red pencil.

"Yes, and then we will share our life story with each other," said the blue pencil.





One day, a military *jawan* entered the shop. He pointed his finger at the red pencil and asked the shopkeeper for the red pencil.

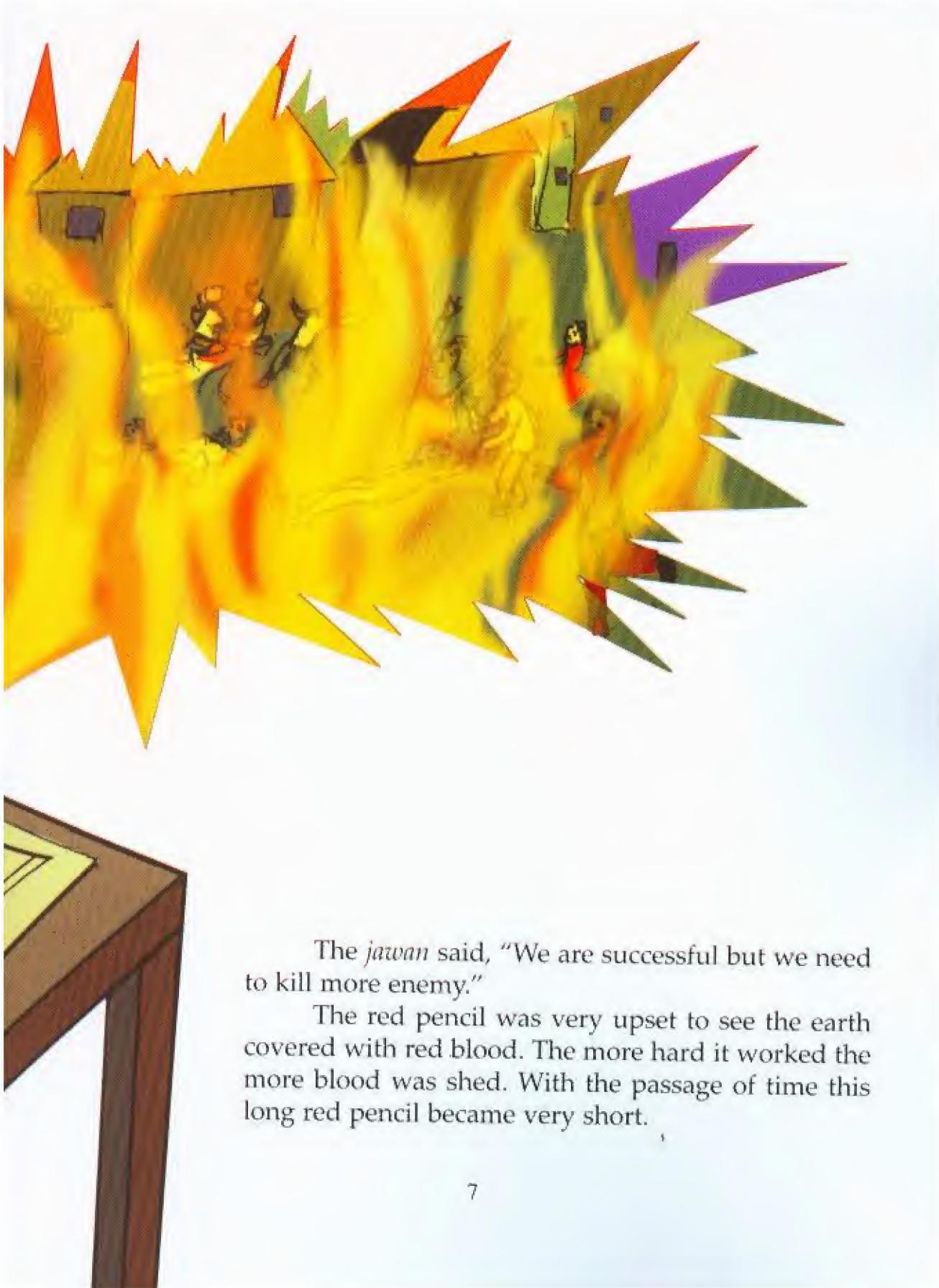


The shopkeeper took the red pencil out from the showcase. He was about to put it in a paper bag, but the *jawan* held the pencil tight in his hand and kept it in the pocket of his shirt.



The *jawan* went to his office and took out the red pencil from his pocket. He then put a map on his table and marked some locations with the red pencil for dropping bombs. Two days later bombs were dropped in some areas. Many houses were destroyed. Many people were killed.





The *jawan* said, "We are successful but we need to kill more enemy."

The red pencil was very upset to see the earth covered with red blood. The more hard it worked the more blood was shed. With the passage of time this long red pencil became very short.

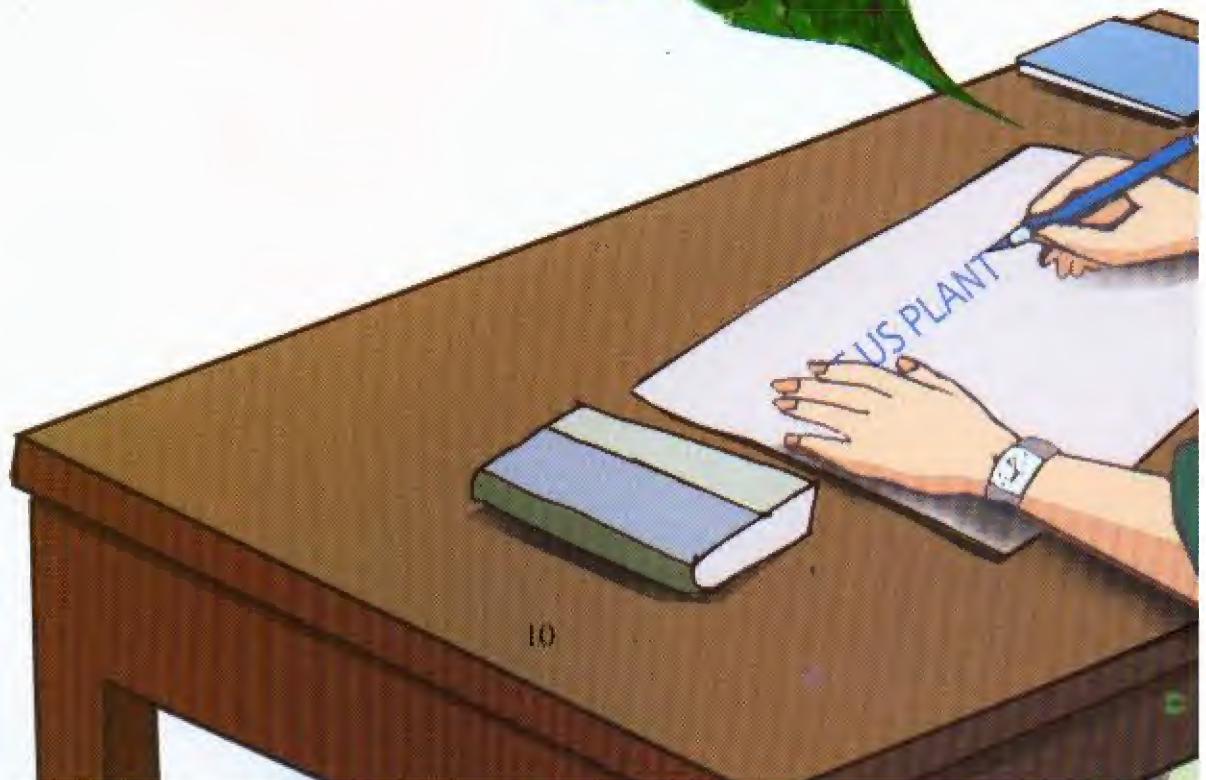
Three days later a school teacher from a small village entered the shop. She asked the shopkeeper for the blue pencil. The shopkeeper gave the pencil in a nice paper bag. She carefully placed it in her bag and went home. She was a kind and gentle lady. Sitting in the corner of her bag, the blue pencil was happy.

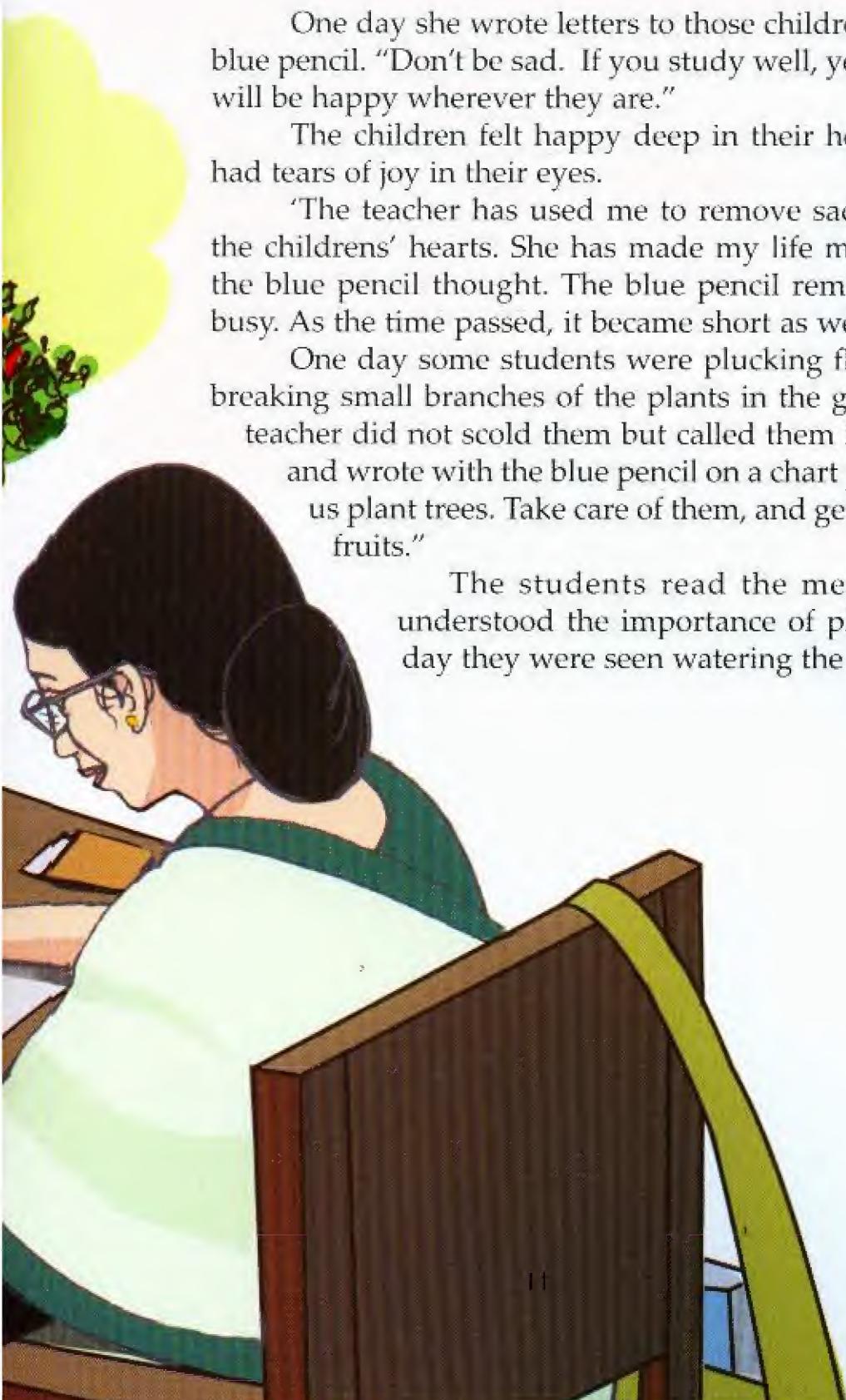
Next morning the teacher went to school along with the blue pencil. The teacher was using the pencil to correct her students' notebooks. She always wrote very encouraging remarks.



One day the teacher found some students sad. She asked them and came to know that their parents had disappeared in the war.







One day she wrote letters to those children with the blue pencil. "Don't be sad. If you study well, your parents will be happy wherever they are."

The children felt happy deep in their hearts. They had tears of joy in their eyes.

'The teacher has used me to remove sadness from the childrens' hearts. She has made my life meaningful,' the blue pencil thought. The blue pencil remained very busy. As the time passed, it became short as well.

One day some students were plucking flowers and breaking small branches of the plants in the garden. The teacher did not scold them but called them in the class and wrote with the blue pencil on a chart paper, "Let us plant trees. Take care of them, and get nutritious fruits."

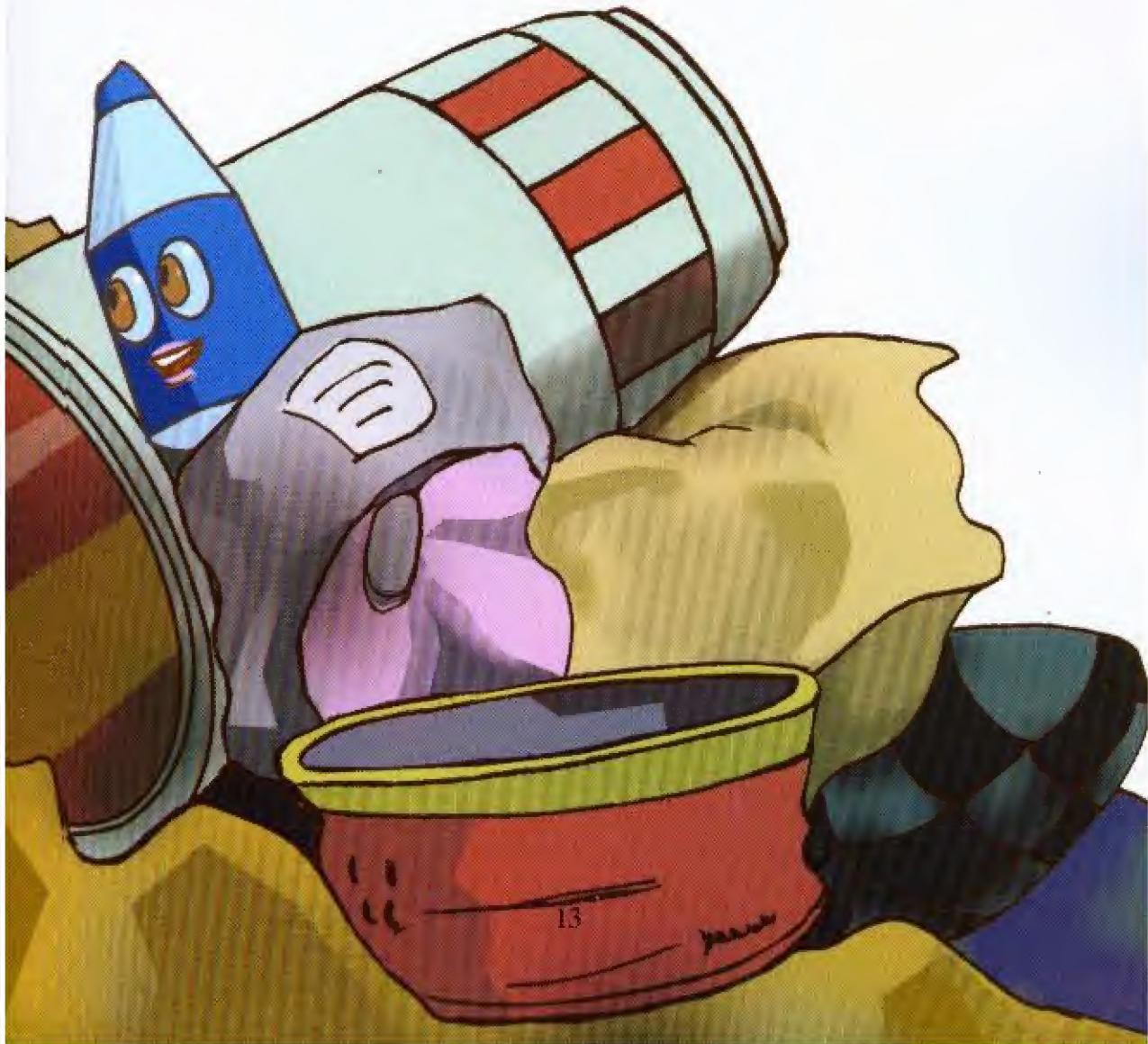
The students read the message and understood the importance of plants. Next day they were seen watering the plants.

The blue pencil and the red pencil had become too short to be held by hands. They were thrown away. And as the luck would have it, they came to the same dumping ground! They saw each other, surprised.

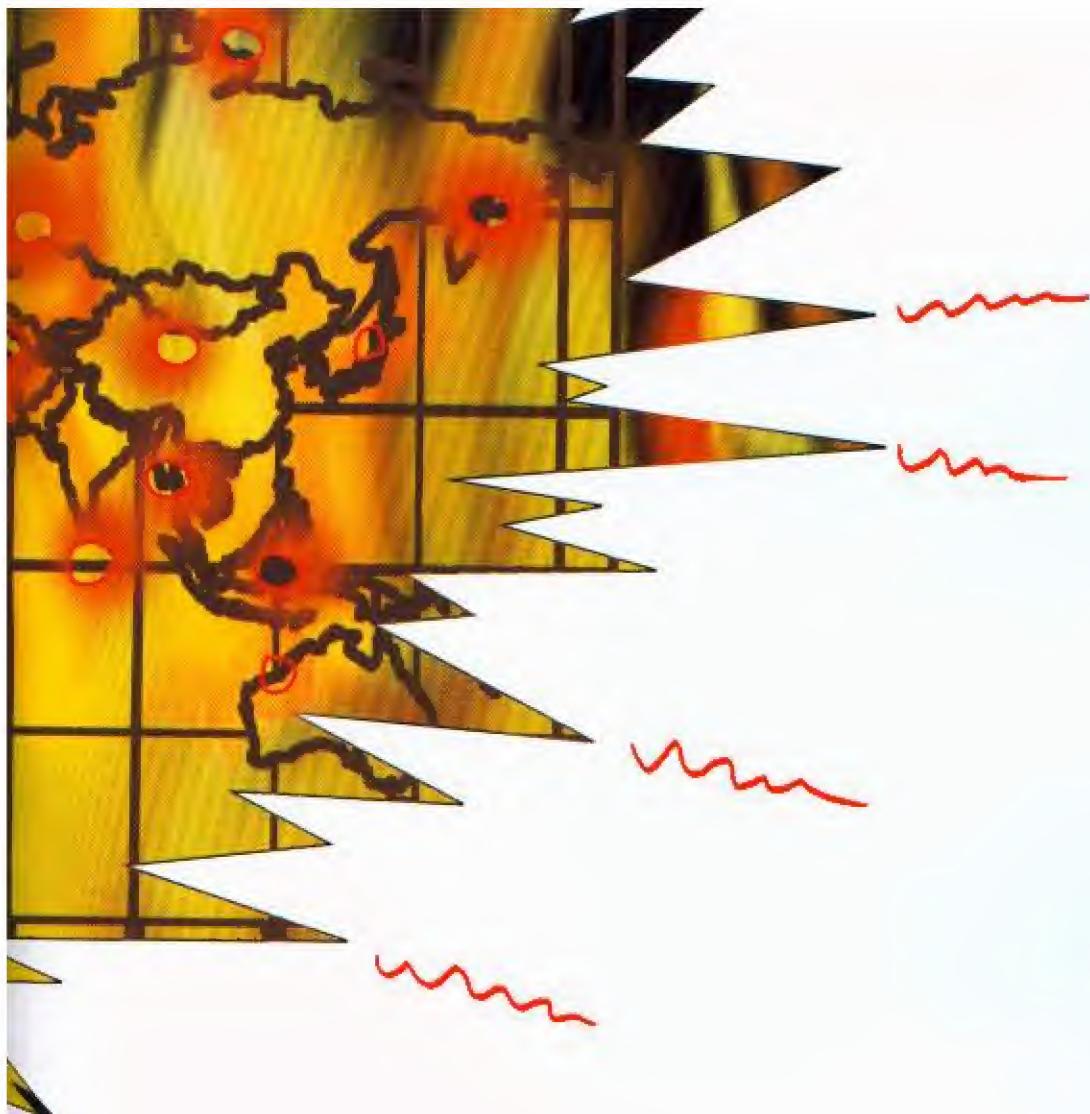


The blue pencil asked the red pencil, "Hello, my red friend, you have also become quite short like me! How was your life?"

The red pencil had tears in its eyes. In a sad voice it said, "A military *jawan* had bought me. He used me for marking the places

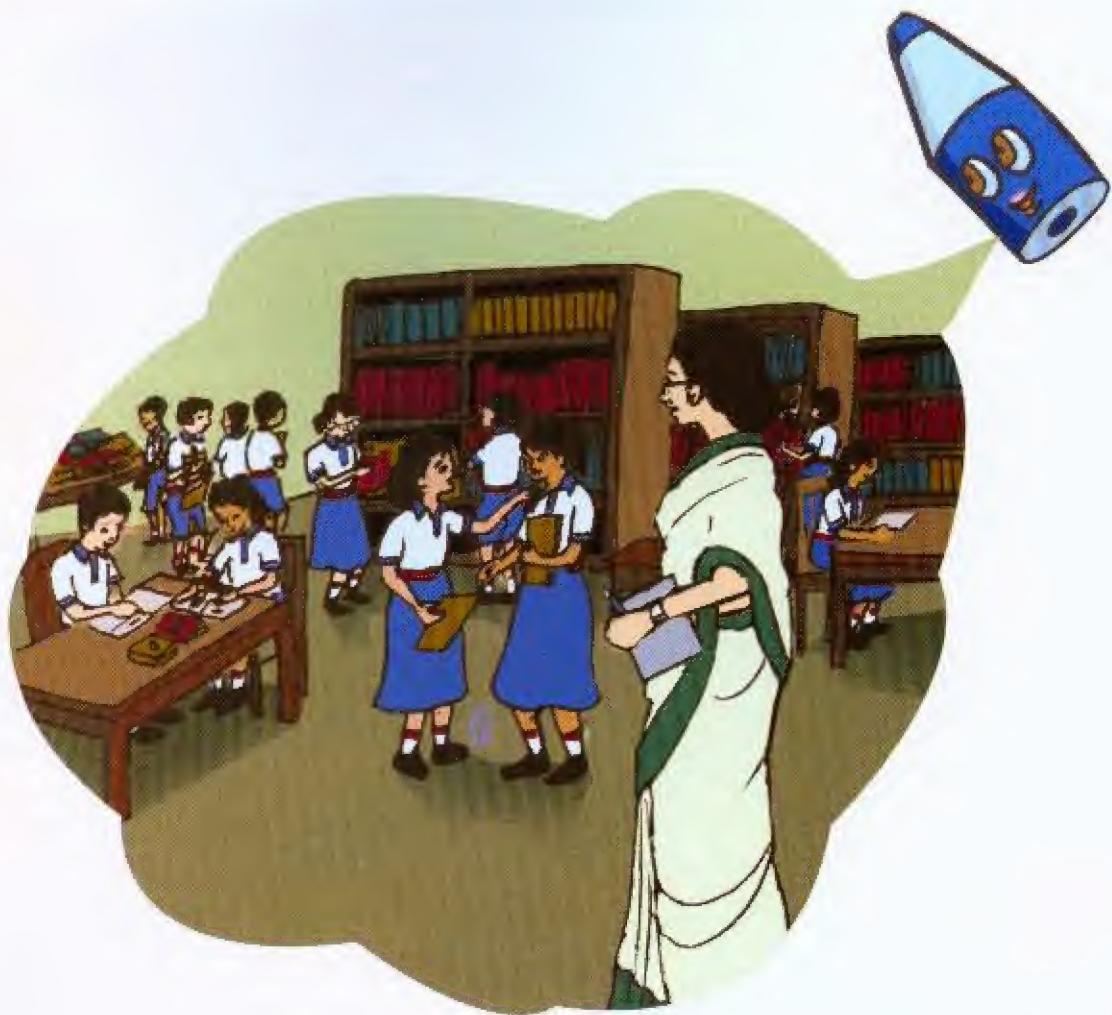






that were to be attacked with bombs. I was also used for counting the number of dead and injured. I have a deep pain in my heart. Tell me, how was your life? You look so happy!"

The blue pencil had a broad smile on its face. "A teacher used me to say kind words to her students. She never scolded them. She used me to write encouraging letters to her sad students all the time. She brought joy on their faces. I had a great life."



"We both were in the same shop but we have a different story to tell. Our happiness and sorrow were in the hands and hearts of those who used us," said the red pencil.

"The same but not the same."

JOINT PUBLICATION PROGRAMME OF BOOKS ON PEACE FOR CHILDREN IN ASIA

Children are the main sufferers from disasters arising out of conflicts and wars. To develop peace, love and harmony in children's innocent minds for their fellow beings without any discrimination through picture books, a project idea '**Listen to Me**' was initiated in 1998 and completed in 2010 by the joint efforts of experts from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Japan. It was organized by the International Center for Literacy and Culture (ICLC), Tokyo in Kathmandu, in collaboration with The Peace Stone Foundation (for Hiroshima) and The Japan Foundation.

Participants of the Project

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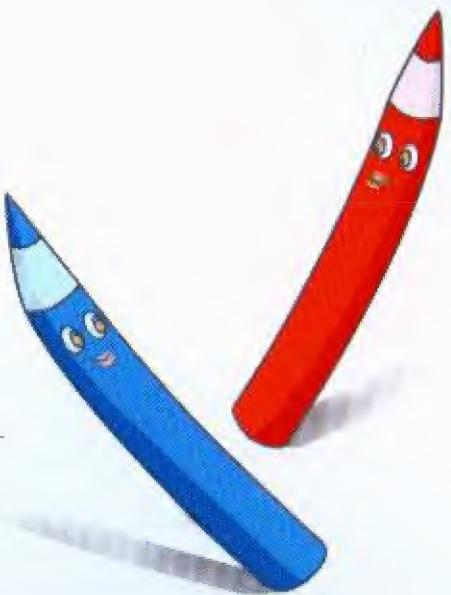
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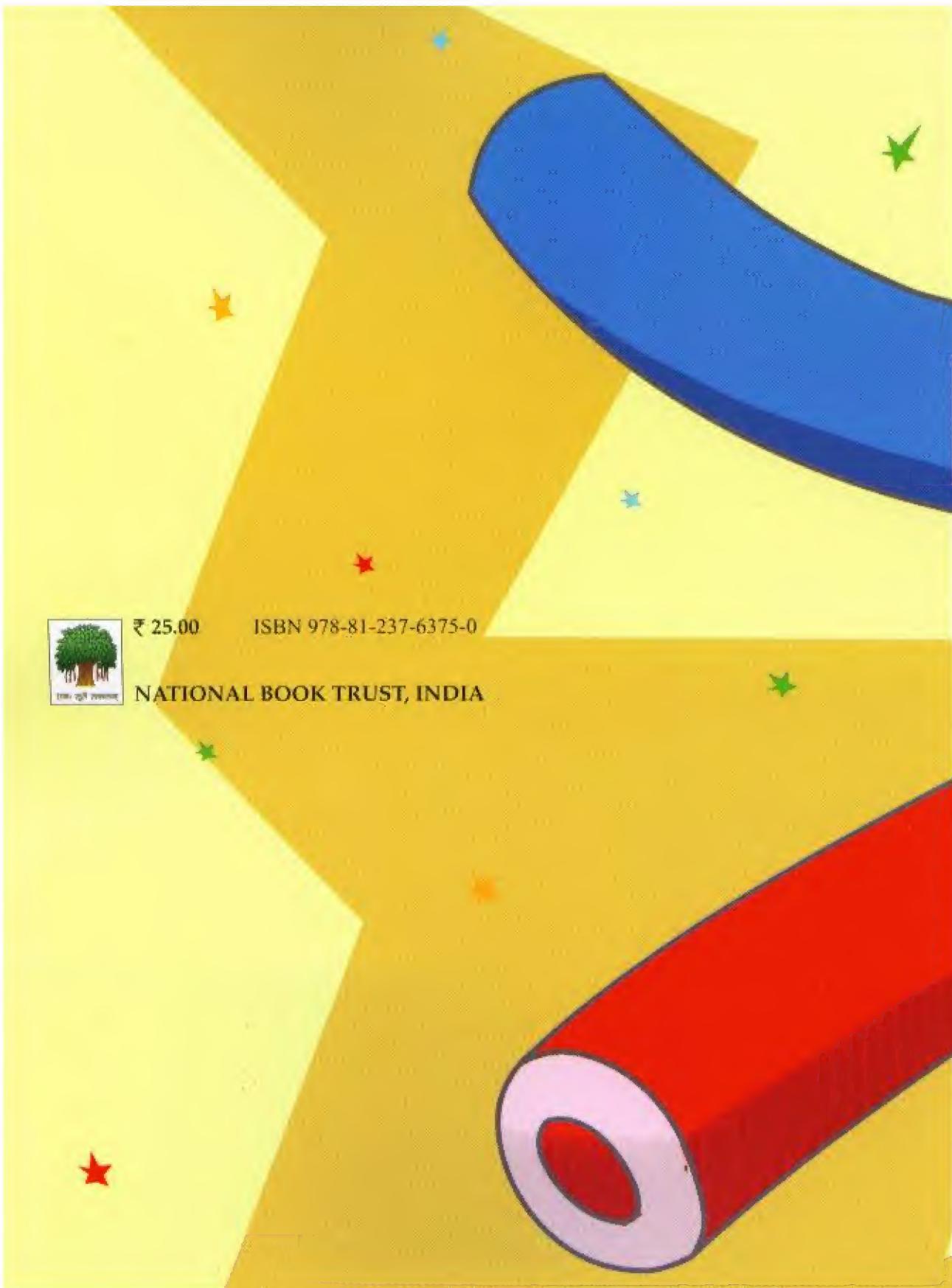
Nepal : Sharad Ranjit, Tek Bir Mukhiya

Japan : Rotoh Tsuda, Akiko Wada, Miki Tanae, Minako Manome and Kohei Ota

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